The Duty of Chriſtians to ſeek the Peace and Welfare of the Community.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

KINGSTON UPON HULL,

ON THE LATE

Public Faſt,

Wednesday, March 8th, 1797,

BY

WILLIAM PENDERED.

Non nobis solùm nati sumus, sed etiam patriæ.

CICERO.

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THE following diſcourſe, which was very haſtily written for the occaſion, claims no merit, except that of being "*a word in ſeaſon.*" In obtruding it on the public, the author is entirely deſtitute of that uſual apology, *the earneſt ſolicitation of friends*, or, *the importunity of thoſe who heard it from the pulpit.* No one has requeſted its publication;—neither, perhaps, ought he to expect that any one will thank him for it. If the candour of thoſe few into whoſe hands it may chance to fall, will *endure* it only, "*with all its imperfections on its head,*" he will endeavour to be content.

While, however, with fear and trembling, he now ſurrenders himſelf to the inflexible juſtice of profeſſional critics, from whoſe tribunal he has ſhrunk back for more than twenty years paſt, he begs to offer a ſhort plea in mitigation of puniſhment. Though under many and ſtrong temptations, even from early life, this is his * *firſt offence*;——it is a very *ſmall* one; and he hopes (yet will not abſolutely promiſe) that he ſhall never be guilty of a ſecond.

* Except that, in certain ephemeral productions, he has now and then tripped it in a maſk.

A SERMON, &c.

JEREMIAH XXIX. 7.

And ſeek the peace of the city, whither I have cauſed you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof ſhall ye have peace.

THESE words are a part of an epiſtle which, under the direction of Jehovah, the prophet Jeremiah wrote and ſent to the people of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive to the city of Babylon. The circumſtances of this people were now truly calamitous. Torn from their native home, and from their ſacred heritage, they ſighed to return to all that was dear to them in life; and liſtened with eagerneſs to every pretended prophet who flattered them with the proſpect of an immediate reſtoration. But that God by whoſe right-

righteous decree their captivity was ordained, and who ſtill remembered the ancient covenant of his mercy towards them, * here charged them by his prophet to wait with patience his own appointed time; to blend their ſecular intereſts with thoſe of the natives of Babylon; to maintain a friendly intercourſe with the people among whom they were called to ſojourn; and to ſeek the peace of the city in which, for a ſeaſon, they were deſtined to dwell. † *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Iſrael, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have cauſed to be carried away from Jeruſalem unto Babylon, Build ye houſes, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives, &c.* "Attend," as if he had ſaid, "to all the intereſts, and diſcharge all the relative, the ſocial, and the civil duties of life, juſt in the ſame manner as though ye were at home." *And ſeek the peace of the city, whither I have cauſed you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof ſhall ye have peace.*

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* Verſe 11. † Verſes 4, 5 6.

Whenever it becomes neceſſary to enforce the duties of patience and active benevolence, it is perhaps a good method to ſtate examples in circumſtances the moſt trying; that ſo, no one may be able to find even the ſhadow of a pretext to excuſe himſelf from the duties enjoined. That *we* are under far ſtronger obligations to ſeek the peace and welfare of *this* country, than the Jews were under with relation to Babylon, it is, I truſt, unneceſſary to prove.

This is our *native* country, in which we trace a long line of anceſtors equally illuſtrious for their patriotic and their religious virtues. Sages,——heroes,——ſaints,—— and martyrs! Some who have ſuſtained our ſinking liberties by their wiſdom; ſome by their valour; ſome by the energy of their prayers;—and ſome by their blood. It is, moreover, the city in which, for ages, the God of Jacob hath dwelt, as in his own peculiar habitation. We have therefore a natural, and an original intereſt in its peace, proſperity, and happineſs. As chriſtians, I acknowledge, our * *citizenſhip* is in heaven. As chriſtians, we are only † *ſtrangers and pil-*

* Phil. iii. 20. † Heb. xi. 13.

pilgrims on the earth. Neither are we bound to conſider ourſelves here, as a part of a chriſtian nation. The idea of a chriſtian nation, inhabiting a particular ſpot of the earth, and governed by chriſtian magiſtrates, is repugnant to the very principle of the chriſtian inſtitution. * Real chriſtians, it is true, are called "a holy nation." † But this holy nation is compoſed of individuals diſperſed over the different parts of the earth. It is a *ſpiritual* nation, of which that of the Jews who dwelt in the land of Paleſtine, was an expreſſive type. Whatever civil liberty and civil advantages therefore we may enjoy in this highly-favoured country, and for which we ought to be truly thankful, we are yet, as chriſtians, in one reſpect, like the Jews in Babylon. We are placed

* The Author of this divine inſtitution, in that good confeſſion which he witneſſed before Pontius Pilate, ſaid, "My kingdom is not of this world." And he has eſtabliſhed, as the fundamental law of his kingdom, the following maxim, "One is your maſter, even Chriſt, and all ye are brethren." His kingdom equally diſowns both magiſtrate and prieſt on earth, though to the civil office of the former, it pays an uniform reſpect.

† 1 Peter ii. 9.

placed by our heavenly Father in a foreign land; we dwell in a foreign city, and under a foreign yoke. Like Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, we ſojourn in a ſtrange country, dwelling, for a ſeaſon, in tabernacles and tents. Or, to adopt the language of the author to the Galatians, which is more conſonant to the preſent ſubject, we inhabit, for a ſeaſon, that "Jeruſalem which now is, and is *ſpiritually* in bondage with her children. But Jeruſalem which is above," the city to which we belong, and to which we aſpire, "is free, and is the mother of us all."

Regarding then our circumſtances here, even in the darkeſt point of view, the duties enjoined on the people of Judah in Babylon are ſtill incumbent on *us*. Even admitting that the veſſel of the ſtate (to uſe another figure) is in the midſt of a ſtorm, and in imminent danger of being wrecked, all the paſſengers on board are neceſſarily alike intereſted in its preſervation. And they who have neither authority nor ſkill to interfere with the helm, and with the management of the ſails, may yet "pray unto the Lord for it." They may offer up their ſupplications

to him that he would ſay to the tempeſtuous wind, "be ſtill." But ſurely our national circumſtances are not ſo deſperate. Surely it is nothing but the idle folly of alarm that makes them *appear* ſo. Surely we may yet conſider ourſelves as the inhabitants of a ſtable and well-fortified city. And while we confeſs that this is not our reſt; that we are only ſtrangers and ſojourners here, let us yet, according to the inſtructions given to the Jews in Babylon, purſue with ſpirit and vigour all the ſocial intereſts of the city. "Build ye houſes," then, "and dwell in them. Plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them." Puſh forward, if poſſible, your various manufactures; keep open all the channels of your commerce; and let your gold circulate with the ſame freedom and confidence as uſual. Infinite praiſe is due to the mercantile and trading inhabitants of this town, for the promptitude and zeal with which they ſtepped forward in the critical moment, to ſupport the credit of the ſeveral banks. Under the influence of ſuch a ſpirit, there can be nothing to fear. It will effectually counteract the unfounded alarms of the

the ignorant and the ſelfiſh; alarms which, as far as they operate, are the very bane of a commercial country like this. Stand aloof, brethren, from their example, and guard againſt their deadly infection. Obſerve all the inſtructions here given to the captive Jews. Not only "build houſes, and dwell in them;" Not only "plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;" but, look forward. Secure, by marriages, * a riſing generation; and, by a laudable induſtry, make the very beſt proviſion you can for children and grand-children. They may, and probably will, ſee better times. It is a very ancient, and a very wiſe maxim, *never to deſpair of the common-wealth.* —— Succeeding generations may reap the fruits of our patient ſtruggles and honeſt toils. We are called to "ſow in tears;" but, let us hope that they will "reap in joy."

Seek, then, the peace of the city. Let the welfare of the community at large be dear to every heart; let it be the object of every ſecular aim. What particular line of conduct each individual ought to purſue for the attainment of this great object, depends on

* Verſe 6.

on an infinite variety of circumſtances, of which it is impoſſible to enter into the detail. To determine this, not only muſt the exiſting ſtate of things be well conſidered, but alſo our ſeveral capacities, and our various ſituations in life. The peace of the city, the peace of the nation, is indeed an object of ſuch magnitude and extent, and depends on movements ſo complex and ſo elevated, that there are few, comparatively, who have either talents or powers to contribute any thing *poſitive* towards it. Upon the wheels of government, whatever buzzing noiſe we may make for peace, we can have little more influence than ſo many flies on the wheels of a mail-coach. * But, if we can-

* This can be applicable only to a particular congregation, as that to which the diſcourſe was firſt addreſſed, and by no means to the public at large. God forbid that the *nation* ſhould ever be reduced to the inſignificance ſuggeſted by the above figure. If the author had the ſmalleſt chance of moving the whole nation, conſtitutionally and legally, to petition the throne for an immediate termination of the preſent unhappy war with France, and thus to ſeek the peace of all Europe, he would "cry aloud, and not ſpare." But here he is even leſs than a fly on a coach-wheel.

cannot *poſitively*, we may all contribute * *negatively* to the peace of the community. It is within the capacity of each individual to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in godlineſs and honeſty."

In ſeeking the peace of the community, our firſt duty unqueſtionably is, to render an uniform obedience to the eſtabliſhed government, and to exiſting laws. Perhaps in theſe laws we may be able to diſcover numerous imperfections. Perhaps we may poſſeſs the fulleſt conviction that ſome things would admit of improvement. And we may believe that, however perfect in theory the conſtitution be, yet, that in its *preſent practice*, it is not abſolutely divine. We may be perſuaded that the popular branch of it is materially defective, and that very ſerious evils ariſe to the community from this defect. Yet from every meaſure of popular reſiſtance, and even from every tumultuous move-

* Perhaps it may be ſuggeſted that peace is itſelf a mere negative idea; that it means nothing more than the abſence of tumult. The above diſtinction, however, cannot fail of being underſtood, and the niceties of metaphyſical diſcrimination are foreign to the deſign of this diſcourſe.

movement, far greater evils would flow. The reaſoning of the apoſtle Paul is therefore ſtrictly applicable to the exiſting government and exiſting laws. "Let every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: The powers that be, are ordained of God," They not only exiſt by his permiſſion, but are inſtituted by his will, as the ſtanding rule of civil duty.—"Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves * condemnation." Similar to this is the argument of the apoſtle Peter on the ſame ſubject. "Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king, as ſupreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well. For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men. † It is incumbent on

* Rom. xiii.

"They who," under the banner of the Prince of Peace, "take the ſword" againſt the civil magiſtrate, "ſhall periſh by the ſword." Matt. xxvi. 52.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15.

on us, therefore, as we tender the peace of the community, to render a ſtrict homage to the exiſting government, and an uniform obedience to every exiſting law. We are bound by the ſacred authority of our Maſter in heaven, to "render unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's," and to "render unto all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour." If indeed we poſſeſs talents to enlighten, or influence to meliorate the legiſlative powers, then, the welfare of the community claims the exerciſe of thoſe talents, and the exertion of this influence. That we ſhould never cenſure the meaſures of the civil government, is not the dictate of either reaſon or religion. A wiſe man, however, will not violently cenſure what he has no chance to amend. And there are ſeaſons, perhaps, when the love and the purſuit of public peace dictate ſilence even to wiſdom herſelf. There are ſeaſons when even the eloquence of a *Demoſthenes* can have no more effect than a whiſper in a ſtorm; and when all the efforts of the moſt enlightened patriotiſm

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are neceſſarily ſpent in vain. Hence permit me to obſerve,

2dly. That in ſeeking the peace of the community, it is our duty to bear with patience thoſe public grievances which are inevitable. Patience is a principal duty of the chriſtian calling, and perhaps one of the brighteſt ornaments of the chriſtian character. Innumerable are the occaſions for exerciſing it in our preſent ſtate. And in the relation we bear to the civil community, to the city, or country in which we dwell, our patience ought to have its perfect work, that we "may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." We ſhould recollect that the good and the evil of our lot on earth are alike the appointment of our heavenly Father. If our notions of civil liberty are ſo refined and elevated, that we even deny its *exiſtence* in this country; if theories of political freedom which never can be realized in this corrupt world, have rendered us ſo ſour and moroſe, that we eſteem ourſelves captives, like the Jews in Babylon; ſtill let us remember who hath *placed* us here. Several times in the chapter before us, the Lord

Lord reminds the people of Judah that it was HE who cauſed them to be carried away captive to Babylon. * And though, it is true, we are not ſo immediately, and ſo viſibly under his government as the Jews were, yet our ſtation and lot are equally of his appointment. He who made of one blood, all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, hath determined the times before appointed, and fixed the bounds of every one's habitation. † To ſay that we are *captives*, under the government of Great Britain, is, I think, ungrateful and unjuſt. But ſuppoſe we were, it is ſtill our duty to ſeek the peace of the community in which we dwell. And to this end, I repeat it, it is incumbent on us to bear with patience thoſe public grievances which are inevitable. If we murmur under the preſſure of unavoidable taxes, and ſpend our breath in fruitleſs clamours againſt the legiſlature which has impoſed them, we do not duly ſeek the peace of the city. Such murmurs are infectious. They naturally ſpread from heart to heart, and from tongue to tongue. Thus, as from a

* Verſes 4, 7, 11. † Acts xvii. 26.

root of bitterneſs ſpringing up, many are defiled, and the community is troubled. Let patience and induſtry, then, unite to ſuſtain whatever burdens the legiſlature may impoſe, and whatever public grievances divine providence may inflict. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" * Can any circumſtance ariſe, however afflictive, but what he ordains? Certainly not. His majeſtic language is, "I form the light, and create darkneſs. I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all theſe things. †" Let us then learn one important leſſon from the example of David. He ſaid, under the preſſure of calamity, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; becauſe *thou* didſt it. ‡"

3. Another duty incumbent on us in ſeeking the peace of the city, undoubtedly is, to defend it againſt every hoſtile invaſion. A duty this, however, which, I truſt, we ſhall never be called to perform. And indeed, as far as human calculation can go, our national ſafety from foreign invaſion, at leaſt for the preſent, is rendered morally certain by the late

* Amos iii. 6. † Iſaiah xlv. 7.

‡ Pſal. xxxix. 9.

late ſignal victory obtained over the Spaniſh fleet.

4th and laſtly. Seek the peace of the city by a due moderation and temper in all political diſcuſſions. A free communication of ſentiments on whatever relates to the civil government, is neither inconſiſtent with the chriſtian character, nor with the peace of the community. But it is a ſubject on which, unhappily, the ſentiments of wiſe and good men are ſo very hoſtile to each other, that if our tempers be not well guarded, ſocial peace and harmony may be materially interrupted. What mode of civil government is beſt in theory; and what meaſures would be beſt, were men, with perfect rectitude of moral principle, to enter anew into the ſocial compact, it would not perhaps be very difficult to aſcertain. But, conſidering all circumſtances as they really exiſt; all the varieties of prejudice, and all the combinations of intereſt; it is not ſurpriſing that men, who, with equal ſincerity, ſeek the welfare of the community, ſhould judge of men and meaſures very differently from one another.

ther.* And if we once ſuffer ourſelves to imagine that thoſe who differ the moſt widely from us in opinion, muſt therefore be either weak or wicked, we greatly err. Such a ſanguine and dogmatical temper is inimical to that ſocial peace which we are here taught to cultivate. But we ought not only to ſeek the peace of the city by the ſeveral means which have been ſuggeſted; it is alſo our duty to pray for it.

"*Pray unto the Lord for it.*"

It is in this way, as Chriſtians, we may the moſt eſſentially and effectually ſerve it. Our utmoſt power to promote the peace of the community by ſocial exertions, is exceedingly limited. The peace of a chriſtian ſociety, or even the peace of a private family, we cannot always by our moſt laborious efforts maintain. How then ſhall our in-

* See the late excellent pamphlet of the Honourable Thomas Erſkine, to whom, under God, the author acknowledges himſelf entirely indebted for the feelings which prompted this diſcourſe. He has lighted his *taper* from the *ſun*. But that able counſellor has drawn him to the bar of a court of juſtice in which, unhappily for the trembling culprit, *he* never pleads;—the awful court of *Reviewers*.

influence extend through the vaſt combinations of ſeven millions of people? How ſhall it operate through all the intricate windings of prejudice, and the mazes of ſelf-intereſted policy? How ſhall we harmonize the jarring elements of which a *nation* is compoſed; and eſpecially when theſe elements are in a ſtate of unuſual perturbation? The beſt ſocial exertions can be of little avail. But "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." * Prayer, real and fervent prayer, is, I had almoſt ſaid, omnipotent to bleſs. Its influence may extend from circle to circle until it tranquillize the whole land. It may draw down from heaven that wiſdom which can at once produce concord and peace through all orders and ranks of men; that wiſdom which will be ſufficient to unite them in bonds of the ſtricteſt amity for the common welfare. The hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord; and he turneth them as ſeemeth beſt in his ſight. He can ſo touch the main ſprings of government as to give to all the movements of the vaſt machine regularity and harmony.

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* James v. 16.

We ought alſo to pray for the *ſpiritual* peace of the city; that the people of which it is compoſed may know that "peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding;" that they be made "free indeed" by the Son of the Moſt High, and become citizens of the heavenly Jeruſalem.

Permit me now to urge ſeveral motives which may excite us thus to ſeek the peace of the community in which we dwell, and to pray unto the Lord for it.

Firſt then, we are bound to do this by ties of *gratitude*. The people of Judah were not, probably, under any obligations of gratitude to king Nebuchadnezzar, nor to the inhabitants of Babylon. But ſurely, amidſt all our calamities, we are under obligations of gratitude to the government and the community with which, under divine providence, we are connected. Every man derives many benefits from his neighbours; and all derive benefits incalculable from the civil government. If, becauſe we ſee, or think we ſee, ſome enormities in the public adminiſtration, we conclude that it affords us no benefit, we are guilty of an error ſimilar

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in kind to that of a man who ſhould deny the beneficence of divine providence, when he happens to be caught in a thunder-ſtorm. Imagine, for one moment, all government aboliſhed, and all public law repealed.—What a train of evils would immediately enſue! What fraud! What rapine! What plunder! What murders, would ſoon deſolate the land! The uncontrolled range of lawleſs paſſions would preſently convert this fertile, and comparatively happy country, into an Aceldama, a field of blood. If there be *one* nation upon the earth that can boaſt a better government than our own, yet how many are evidently under a far worſe! And the local advantages, the religious privileges, the literary inſtitutions, the charitable foundations, and the commercial eſtabliſhments of this iſland, give it perhaps, even at preſent, a decided ſuperiority to every other ſpot on the globe. From gratitude, then, ſeek the peace of the community, and pray unto the Lord for it.

2dly. We are bound to do this by ties of *benevolence*. It muſt be acknowledged that the chriſtian religion extends our ties of benevolence

nevolence to all mankind. According to that ſacred code which, as chriſtians, we profeſſedly revere, the law of neighbourhood knows no other limits than thoſe of the human race. And by the example of the good Samaritan, we are taught that to bind up the wounds and to relieve the ſorrows of an enemy, is a duty required of us. In ſhort, we are ſtrictly forbidden to injure our neighbours, and ſtrictly commanded, as far as we have ability and opportunity, to do good unto all men. The law of charity, however, which obliges us to produce the greateſt poſſible quantity of good to our fellow-men, neceſſarily confines within a narrow ſphere, our active benevolence. The intereſts of our own country will fully occupy all our powers. And if, under the notion of an univerſal charity, we attempted to render ſervice to a foreign nation at war againſt it, we ſhould poſitively betray thoſe intereſts. We ſhould ſacrifice fidelity and juſtice to a viſionary philanthropy. And if we only abandon all patriotic ſentiment, though we may not be miſchievous, we ſhall be nearly uſeleſs on the earth. The mere citizen of the world,

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who boaſts an univerſal and an equal benevolence to mankind, is little better, as a member of ſociety, than an oak in the foreſt, which impartially waves its branches to every quarter of the horizon according as the ſeveral winds chance to blow. The ſocial benevolence, therefore, which our religion enjoins, limits our active exertions, at leaſt in ſeaſons of general ſtratagem and war, to the intereſt of that community in which we dwell. And here our exertions ſhould be zealous and indefatigable.

Finally; *ſelf-intereſt* obliges us to ſeek the peace of the community, and to pray unto the Lord for it. This is the only argument urged in the text; * becauſe with men in general, and even with good men, it is an argument of greater force than any other. "Seek the peace of the city, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof ſhall *ye* have peace."

* It may perhaps juſtly be queſtioned whether the Jews in Babylon were capable of being actuated by a higher motive. The Moſaic œconomy was little calculated to expand the mind beyond the boundaries of a national ſelf-intereſt. Patriotiſm and piety were almoſt the only vir-

Our ſecular intereſts are neceſſarily blended with thoſe of the community in which we dwell. To the lot of the nation, whether proſperous or adverſe, as long as we remain in it we are indiſſolubly bound. If peace reign through our borders, we ſhall ſhare her benignant ſmile. But if tumult once rear

virtues which it cheriſhed. It was a ſyſtem of *fighting* and *faſting;* a ſyſtem, to which, as a nation, we ſeem to be ſomewhat too partial. Not that amidſt our national enormities we are remarkably guilty of deſpiſing the *good creatures of God.* A diſcerning ſpectator of the luxuries with which our tables are daily loaded, would be in little danger of miſtaking us for the diſciples of John the Baptiſt. But perhaps, like the Jews, we are too much inclined to compenſate for the deficiencies of moral juſtice and univerſal charity, by public faſts and acts of an auſtere devotion. God forbid that the ſolemn national faſt which this diſcourſe commemorates, ſhould meet that awful reproof, "Behold, ye faſt for ſtrife and debate, and to ſmite with the fiſt of wickedneſs!"

When the author ſays above, "*our* tables," he begs he may not be miſunderſtood. His meaning is the ſame as if we were to ſay "*our* merchant ſhips." He has no *perſonal* ſhare in either. He can ſay, however, with a true thankfulneſs, that hitherto, he has never, from *neceſſity*, kept ſo much as one faſt-day. Would to God all the inhabitants of this iſland could join in the ſame grateful acknowledgment! But alas! — —

rear its horrid head, all our ſocial and domeſtic comforts will be inſtantly blaſted. I ſhall not attempt to paint the horrours of anarchy and popular tumult. It is a taſk, indeed, to which I feel myſelf utterly unequal. It belongs to the maſterly pencil of a *Burke*, the exquiſite colouring of whoſe eloquence, glowing with all the fire of his rage, can ſcarcely exceed the truth. * It is a very miſtaken notion that popular tumult can affect only the ſeats of royalty and nobility; the ſeats of opulence and of penſioned greatneſs. To the humbleſt cottage, where honeſty reſides, the evil equally extends. Through all the gradations of ſociety there is a chain of dependence which public peace alone can preſerve entire. And when once, by tumult, this chain is broken, confuſion

* Mr. Burke's dereliction of his former political principles, is a circumſtance which muſt neceſſarily wound the heart of philanthropy. Yet whatever may be the deſtructive tendency of his preſent views, to regard his late writings as the mere effuſions of an intereſted and a venal orator, is ſurely inconſiſtent with that charity which "thinketh no evil." As far as he is an enemy to popular tumult, he yet deſerves to be univerſally hailed as the friend of virtue and the friend of man.

fuſion, diſtreſs, and wretchedneſs muſt become univerſal. All families and all hearts muſt, in a greater or leſs degree, feel the ſhock. A few rapacious individuals indeed, more dexterous in the art, or more daring in the practice of plunder, may chance to enrich themſelves. But every honeſt man muſt eſſentially ſuffer. He who now eats his hard-earned and ſcanty meal in quiet; who ſurveys a healthy and ſmiling offſpring, though only half-fed; and who ſleeps unmoleſted on his bed of ſtraw, would be deprived of his penurious comforts, and reduced to utter deſpair. Far be it from me ever to ſpeak, or even to think of a ſcanty meal, a half-fed offſpring, and a bed of ſtraw, with coldneſs and unconcern. Yet theſe are *bleſſings*, theſe are *felicities*, when compared with the univerſal inheritance entailed by anarchy and popular tumult. Seek, then, the peace of the community: for in the peace thereof ſhall ye have peace.

National proſperity is now perhaps, even beyond our moſt ſanguine hopes, at leaſt for a long ſeries of years to come. Peace, however, is the ſovereign good. And peace, either

either in a family, or in a nation, may consist with poverty. It may consist with accumulated debt, where there are the means of supporting credit, and of discharging as it arises, every legal demand. Let not then the members of the great national household uselessly rail against the past mismanagement of individuals; but let them endeavour to obtain the appointment of *wiser stewards*, and unite all heads, all hearts, and all hands to sustain and to alleviate the existing burden.

It is the part of individual wisdom, however, not only to aim at securing the very best that can be attained; but also to provide against the very worst that can arise. They whose sole happiness rests on the harmony and peace of civil society, or indeed on any thing human or earthly, repose themselves, as it were, upon a slender plank on the bosom of the great deep. Unless our hope, "as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, enter into that which is within the *heavenly* vail;" amidst our greatest apparent security, one hour may produce a movement which will overwhelm us for ever. National commotions *may* arise;—nations

them-

themſelves are only ſo many ſhadows which muſt ſoon paſs away;—the firmeſt earthly thrones, now tottering to their baſes, muſt ſhortly fall;—empires and kingdoms will ſoon totally diſappear;—yea, the viſible heavens will be diſſolved by fire, and the whole fabric of nature will ſink into one mighty ruin. Amidſt theſe tremendous proſpects, they, and they only are ſecure who look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwell righteouſneſs and everlaſting peace. May we then, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, and looking for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God, be enabled by his grace to ſerve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. May we follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Amen.

THE END.

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